



Office of the Governor

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
THE PEOPLE'S GOVERNOR

PRESS RELEASE

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Governor Schwarzenegger Orders Increased Personnel, Equipment to Combat Wildfires in California

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger today issued Executive Order S-07-07 directing the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) to mobilize additional personnel and equipment to respond to wildfires in California. He also directed state agencies, including the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, California National Guard, California Conservation Corps and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation to coordinate together and with federal and local agencies to maximize California's fire prevention and fighting capabilities. Below is the text of the Governor's executive order:

EXECUTIVE ORDER S-07-07

WHEREAS the threat of wildfires in California present extreme peril to the people, property and environment; and

WHEREAS this emergency situation of imminent fire danger is caused by the extraordinary number of dead, dying and diseased trees resulting from prolonged drought, overstocked forests and infestation by bark beetles and other decay organisms; and

WHEREAS the number of dead and dying trees continues to increase, providing a readily available fuel load which could result in catastrophic fires; and

WHEREAS an Arctic Cold Front resulting in extreme low temperatures and freezing conditions swept through California, beginning on January 11, 2007, and continuing for a period of time thereafter, contributed to the increased mortality of wildland vegetation therefore fire danger; and

WHEREAS below normal precipitation, higher than season normal temperatures, strong winds and low relative humidity in the majority of the State during this past winter have contributed to early drying of brush and other wildland vegetation; and

WHEREAS reduction in other-agency resources, including aviation assets, limits their initial attack capabilities; and

WHEREAS coordinated fire prevention, aggressive fuels reduction programs and strong

initial attack resources remain critical; and

WHEREAS increased risk of catastrophic wildfires throughout California threatens the lives, property and economic well-being of the people of the State; and

WHEREAS the increased risk of catastrophic wildfires throughout California may result in unplanned releases of air pollutants that adversely affect air and water quality, soil stability, populations of sensitive and endangered fish and wildlife species, and their habitat; and

WHEREAS the increased risk of catastrophic wildfires could significantly impact state efforts to reduce greenhouse gases by large uncontrolled emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases caused by wildfire; and

WHEREAS the United States Forest Service and Federal Emergency Management Agency have directed funding to assist in fuel removal and forest health improvement.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, Governor of the State of California, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the State of California, do hereby issue this order to become effectively immediately:

IT IS ORDERED that the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) shall secure and deploy additional resources necessary, as determined by the Director, to protect the safety of persons and property from wildfires during periods of elevated fire risk as follows:

- Staff additional fire crews, fire engines, fire bulldozers, and aviation resources as warranted based on fire threat conditions.
- Assign a crew of four firefighters to selected CAL FIRE fire engines as warranted based on fire threat conditions.
- Assign a Helitack Crew to the San Diego County Sheriffs Department helicopter.
- Provide for immediate availability and utilization of the Supertanker aircraft.
- Assign additional resources in the CAL FIRE contract counties as warranted based on fire threat conditions.
- Coordinate with the military for those resources that may be available for assistance during emergencies in California.
- Assign additional fire safety inspectors where and when beneficial to reduce fire risk.
- Assign fire lookouts during peak fire conditions as part of CAL FIRE staffing patterns.
- Increase staffing for command and control functions at CAL FIRE Unit Emergency Command Centers, Northern and Southern Operations centers and the CAL FIRE Sacramento Coordination Center when necessary to respond to significant fire events.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that CAL FIRE obtain additional staffing as necessary to support a heightened level of fire prevention public awareness and education utilizing CAL FIRE Volunteers in Prevention, Fire Safe Councils, and the Office of the State Fire Marshal.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that CAL FIRE continue to expedite the processing of contracts and grants of federal funds to the communities as quickly as possible and support all local and regional responses to the bark beetle affected tree eradication and community emergency planning efforts.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the Office of Emergency Services (OES), in consultation

and coordination with CAL FIRE, as fire threat conditions warrant, deploy OES fire engine strike teams to ensure a substantial response capability to any wildland fire situation in California, and that the costs of the deployment shall be reimbursed consistent with the California Fire Service and Rescue Emergency Mutual Aid Plan and the California Fire Assistance Agreement.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the California National Guard prepare its aviation assets, and pre-position ground support equipment as appropriate for immediate response to major wildfires and report to OES weekly on the status of all aircraft.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, including the Division of Juvenile Justice, place the highest priority for assignment of level-one inmates and wards to staff Conservation Camp Fire Crews.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that the California Conservation Corps report to CAL FIRE daily on the status of all its support crews for response to wildfires.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that OES review appropriate state departments to assure preparedness for response to wildfires.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that CAL FIRE and OES work closely with federal, state and local government agencies, bordering states, and the government of Mexico to maximize California's fire prevention and fighting capabilities and to provide appropriate reciprocal assistance when requested.

This Order is not intended to, and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable in law or equity, against the State of California, its departments, agencies or other entities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that as soon as hereafter possible, this order be filed in the Office of the Secretary of State and that widespread publicity and notice be given to this order.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 9th day of May 2007.

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

Governor of California

ATTEST:

DEBRA BOWEN

Secretary of State